

VAYIKRA { וַיְקִרֵּא } (And He Called)

Leviticus 1:1-6:7, Isaiah 43:21-44, Hebrews 10:1-18

A Messianic Commentary By Hannah Nesher www.voiceforisrael.net

This Shabbat, we begin the book of Leviticus. In Hebrew, it is called **Vaykira**, after its opening word, meaning ‘**And He called...**’

“And יהוה called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting.” (Leviticus 1:1)

Happy New Year!

This Sabbath often marks the first month of **Nisan**, which God ordained as the first month of the Biblical calendar. In actuality then, rather than wishing one another a ‘Happy New Year’ in the seventh month of Tishrei (as is the Jewish custom) or on January 1st as most people celebrate, the Biblical New Year begins today in Nisan.



The Sacrifice of the Old Covenant (painting by Peter Paul Rubens)

"God said to Moshe and Aharon in the Land of Egypt, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year!' " (Shmot/Exodus 12:1-2)

When God spoke these words, Israel stood on the very threshold of their redemption from slavery in Egypt. Why did God choose this particular moment to set the Biblical New Year?

The reason to this question is that only a free person has need of a calendar by which to order his life. A slave rises, works, sleeps and orders his entire existence according to his or her master’s whims. Thus God was saying to His people, “*Soon you will be a free nation and will need your own calendar.*”

It is believed in traditional Judaism that just as the month of Nissan ushered in our redemption from bondage in Egypt, so too will the Messiah return to bring our eternal redemption in Nissan.

“In Nisan they were redeemed, and in Nisan they are destined to be redeemed in the future.”
(Rosh ha-Shanah 11a; Mechilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochay 12:42; Tanchuma, Bo 9)

In adopting a lunar based calendar, Israel made a clean break from the Egyptian worship of the ‘sun god’. The month of Nissan was set as the first month of the year because it is the month in which the Jewish people were freed from slavery in Egypt - the house of Bondage. So, too, may we reckon all time from the moment of our redemption from sin and death through the sacrifice of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah).

The Third Book of Moses, Leviticus/Vaykira, gives the laws regarding sacrifices and burnt offerings. All these Old Testament sacrifices were a picture of the coming sacrifice of the Messiah. They all pointed to Yeshua and were all fulfilled in Him when He came to earth and died on the cross as the final sacrifice.

Torat Kohanim

The oldest name for this book is '**Torat Kohanim**' (The Law of the Priests). It describes the functions of the Old Covenant Priesthood (Cohanim), and the duties of the Priestly nation. Therefore it is also known as the '**Book of Holiness**'.

Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic sect of Judaism in the 18th century said, “*Everything created contains a spark of holiness.*”

This idea of holiness in a Hebraic context is ‘kadosh’, meaning literally ‘set apart’. When God said to the Israelites, “*V'atem tih'u li mamlech kohanim v'goy kadosh*” (And you will be to Me a Kingdom of Priests and a holy (kadosh) nation”), God set apart His people to serve Him in devotion and sincerity.

“You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:6)



High Priest Offering a Sacrifice of a Goat (illustration from Henry Davenport Northrop. *Treasures of the Bible*. International Pub. Co., 1894.)

With its instructions regarding holy practices (offerings & sacrifices), holy places (the Temple), holy people (The Priests – Cohanim), holy food (kashrut), holy finances (tithing) and holy dates (Biblical festivals) – what could be the relevance of this often overlooked book of the Old Testament to non-Jewish New Covenant Believers?

We have all, Jew or Gentile, who have come to faith in the Messiah, Yeshua, been called to be part of a ‘*royal priesthood*’ to serve Adonai. Gentiles who once were ‘*not a people*’ (*loh ami*), are now part of God’s holy people: “...**you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people,...**” (1 Peter 2:9)

Since the Temple has been destroyed and the Old Testament sacrifices done away with, some New Covenant believers might be tempted to consider this ‘Torat Kohanim’, as irrelevant; but nothing could be further from the truth! As New Covenant Cohanim (priests), the study of these sacrifices can bring fresh and new revelation to enrich our relationship with the Lord.

During an early devotion time, I noticed that with only the early morning dawn light to illumine the pages of my Bible, I could not manage to decipher the words; but when I turned on the full light, I had no problem reading the text and understanding the message. So too, do I ask for God’s full light to shine upon this reading and studying of God’s word, so that we will discover new and wonderful things from His Torah!

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Torah.” (Psalm 119:18)

The central theme of this week’s parashah addresses the universality of humankind, forgiveness, and freedom from condemnation.

I believe it is one of the most important and fundamental messages ever! And just in case a thought pops up, “*Oh, forgiveness again.... I’ve heard all that a thousand times!*” please hang in there with me and examine this from a Hebraic-Jewish perspective. I believe you will be rewarded with new revelation that may help to bring a more complete healing to your body, mind, soul and spirit.

Laying a Foundation

These spiritual principles of blood sacrifice and substitutionary atonement are not well understood by many, including the Jewish people, making it difficult to understand the significance of Yeshua’s death on a cross.

I know that this certainly made absolutely no sense to me as a young, Jewish woman, having never studied the laws of burnt offerings and blood sacrifices. When a Christian first told me, ‘*Jesus died for your sins*’, my first thought was, “*Well, that surely must have been terrible for him, but really, I never asked him to!*”

Yeshua’s death on the cross and His shed blood cannot fully impact upon our soul, unless we first come to understand these Old Testament laws of blood sacrifices and sin-offerings. They are the foundation to the understanding of our faith in the blood sacrifice of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah).

The Lord is building Jerusalem in our day; and we see it with our very own eyes. In our little moshav (village), several homes are being built on vacant lots; but the first thing that must be done, before building the house, is to lay a solid foundation.

This is what we are doing in this study from Vayikrah – laying a foundation upon the ‘Rock’ which will stand through all the storms of life.

Speaking of storms, in these last days, tsunamis and earthquakes of incredible intensity have hit the nation of Japan and other nations causing terrible destruction of life and property. God is shaking everything that can be shaken; but thanks be to God, we are receiving a Kingdom which can never be shaken.¹ Halleluyah!



House under construction in Israeli village

Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices

Chapter one of the Book of Leviticus (Vayikra in Hebrew) deals with the various types of burnt offerings and sacrifices. This entire sacrificial system remained central to the very heart and soul of Jewish national life until the destruction of the Temple. Through the continual sacrificing of animals on the altar, God was burning into the psyche of His people an awareness of their own sin and the terrible consequence of sin – which is death.

“The soul who sins shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:20) **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua Adoneinu (our Lord).”** (Romans 6:23)

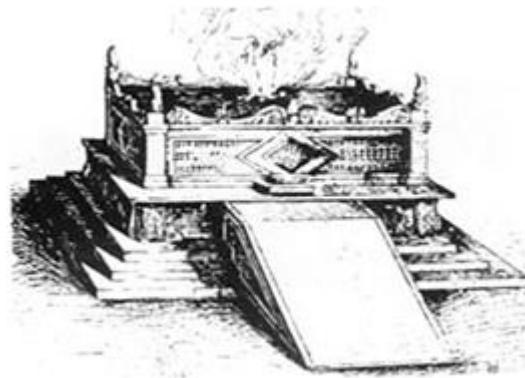
What is the primary difference between an offering and a sacrifice? Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch suggests that a sacrifice requires giving up something of great value to oneself in order to benefit another; whereas an offering is simply a gift to please the one who receives it.

Laws regarding sacrifices and offerings are found throughout the Torah, but the first seven chapters of Leviticus (Vayikra) are dedicated to describing in detail the five main kinds of offerings: The burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering.

¹ Hebrews 12:27, 28

1. Burnt offerings (Hebrew: oleh karbanot עלה קרבנות) were those in which the sacrifice would be completely burnt – none would be eaten. The fire on the altar was never to be extinguished. . “**A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.**” (Leviticus 6:13)

For this reason, when we light our Shabbat candles on Friday night to usher in the Sabbath, it is customary not to blow out the flame but to let the candles burn down completely.



The altar of the tabernacle (illustration from Philip Y. Pendleton. *Standard Eclectic Commentary*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1901.)

The worshipper would bring a sacrificial animal (a male without blemish) to the door of the tabernacle. The chosen sacrifice would be either a bull, goat, pigeon, or turtledove depending on the financial status of the one making the offering.

“Let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.” (Leviticus 1:3)

The Israelite would then place his hands upon the head of the sacrificial animal with the knowledge that this innocent animal was about to be slaughtered in his place. After asking Adonai for forgiveness, the animal would be killed.



2. Meal Offerings (מנחה, minchah)

In addition to animals, the people of Israel also gave offerings of meal (cereals) or vegetables. Often the choicest flour was mixed with oil and salt to make a cake; but they could not contain leaven or honey. The priest would burn a portion and eat the rest. A portion of incense (frankincense) was also brought by the worshipper whose purpose was to dedicate his life to generosity.

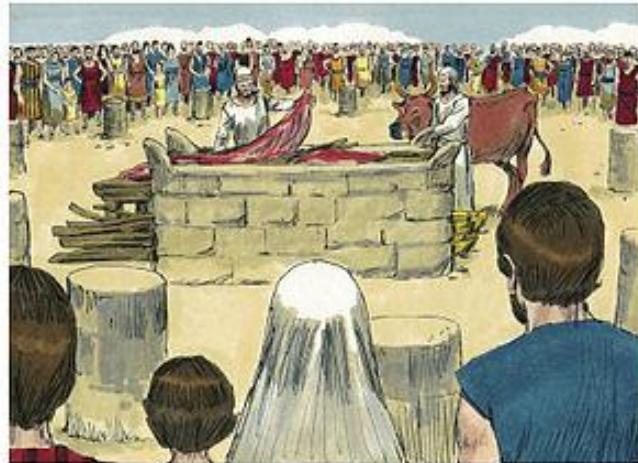
3. The Peace Offering (Sacrifice of Well-Being)

(שְׁלָמִים, shelamim) was similar to the burnt offering except that a portion would be eaten by the priests and even by the one offering up the sacrifice. It was usually a voluntary offering of praise and thanksgiving,² such as when Jacob and Laban made a treaty with one another.²

² Genesis 31:43-55

4. The Sin Offerings

(חַטָּאת, *chatat*) were given for unintentional sins.³ Sins not brought before the Lord individually would be atoned for in a collective way once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) when the Cohen Hagadol (High Priest) would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat for forgiveness of the sins of the nation of Israel as well as his own.



Priests Offering a Sacrifice (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Sweet Publishing)

5. The Trespass (Guilt) Offerings (מַנְגֵּשׁ, *asham*)⁴ was a sacrifice as well as an offering of money given in cases of fraud or deceit. The offender needed to make restitution plus another 20% (a fifth more).

Judaism and Treatment of Animals

As an ardent animal lover, I think it is necessary here to insert a note about Judaism and its treatment of animals. Were the Jewish people, through this endless sacrificing of animals, being instructed by God to be cruel to animals? Doesn't God love animals as His own creations? It is important to know that the Torah teaches humane treatment of animals: "**A righteous man regards the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.**" (Proverbs 12:10)



Although most people are kind to their animals, I have encountered cases of animal abuse here in Israel (yes, sin exists even here). One particular situation involved a rabbi and a beautiful golden lab I called Charlie.⁵ At one point, when I just wasn't getting through to the rabbi, I copied this Scripture out in Hebrew and tacked it onto his door. Soon after, Charlie began to receive much better treatment, Praise Adonai!

³ Leviticus 4:1-4

⁴ Leviticus 6:5-7

⁴ See article, Charlie and the Rabbi www.voiceforisrael.net/articles

In Judaism, animals are to be loved, properly cared for, and treated with kindness. For example, cattle are to be fed before their owner sits down to eat.⁶ The Talmud (oral law) gives instructions for how to slaughter animals for food in such a manner as to inflict as little pain as possible.

Satanic Counterfeits

Animal rights activists are likely appalled to read of all the bloody sacrifices that were required in the Old Testament. Some people, even Christians, are uncomfortable with the whole idea of blood sacrifices. One of the reasons for this is our natural human aversion to blood. Another reason is because of the association of blood sacrifices with evil, satanic rituals.

Photo: Animal sacrifice offered together with libation in Ancient Greece. Attic red-figure oinochoe, ca. 430–425 BC (Louvre) (Wikipedia).



Whereas the Old Testament sacrifices to YHVH יהוה foreshadowed the Great Sacrifice to come in Yeshua giving up his own life for our sins; Satanism observes its own system of blood sacrifices to the powers of darkness. Satan often attempts to twist and pervert the Word of God, using it for his own evil purposes - as he did with Yeshua when he was tested in the wilderness (Luke 4). He seeks to create wicked counterfeits to the holy things of God, such as blood sacrifices.

The ritual killing of animals has been practiced by people of various pagan religions to appease their false gods. Many cultures used animal sacrifice in purification ceremonies. Some of these include (in addition to the Hebrews): Greeks, Romans, Ancient Egyptians, Aztecs and Yoruba.



Is animal sacrifice still practiced today? Yes, followers of Santería (a religion of Caribbean origin) as well as others do, to this day, offer up some small animals to cure the sick or give thanks to their god (Orisa) as part of their ritual activities. There are also some Christians in certain Greek villages who, in a practice called kourbània, sacrifice animals to Orthodox saints.

Photo above: A Santería ceremony known as "Cajón de Muertos". Havana, Cuba, 2011.

⁶ Deuteronomy 11:15

Human Sacrifice

In some cultures and religions, human beings are also sacrificed. Why would people sacrifice other humans to their pagan gods? In times of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, or volcanic eruptions (which are seen as evidence of their gods' anger or displeasure) the human sacrifice is offered up in the hopes of appeasing their deities' wrath.



Babylonian [cylinder seal](#) representing [child sacrifice](#)

Some believe that in order to become extremely wealthy (\$20 million+) a human **blood sacrifice** is required. Claims have been made (which most consider outrageous) that certain celebrities have actually performed these sacrifices in order to obtain their fame and fortune.

It is a known fact, however, that people who worship Satan (Satanists) have been performing human blood sacrifices from ancient times and some may even continue to do so to this very day.

Judaism abhors the concept of human sacrifice, knowing that it is abhorrent to Elohim, as it is written: “**Never give your children as sacrifices to the god Molech**⁷ [by burning them alive]. **If you do, you are dishonoring the name of your God. I am Yehovah יְהוָה .”** (Leviticus 18:21)

It is for this reason that most Jewish people find it so difficult to believe in Yeshua – human sacrifice has always been associated with paganism and is strictly forbidden. The one true God completely forbade His people from pagan worship customs and especially hated the practice of human (child) sacrifice:

“You must not worship. תַּאֲכִל your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.” (Deuteronomy 12:31)

Knowing that God detests human sacrifice (especially that of a son or daughter) the Jewish people naturally assume that our God would never allow the sacrifice of His own son. This is a significant stumbling block to the Jewish people receiving salvation through Yeshua the Messiah; however we can read in the ancient prophet Isaiah that it was in God's perfect plan to lay all of our sins and iniquities upon the Messiah, son of God:

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:5-6)

⁷ Molech is the name of an ancient Ammonite god. Moloch worship was practiced by the Canaanites, Phoenicians, and related cultures in North Africa and the Levant. Associated with child sacrifice.

The Jewish people did not always keep God's ways; and against His commands they mingled and intermarried with the people of the pagan nations all around them, adopting some of their most abominable worship practices such as child sacrifice:

"They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their own sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. The land became polluted with blood." (Psalm 106:37-38)



Aztec burial of a sacrificed child at [Tlatelolco](#).

The place where these apostate Israelites sacrificed their children by fire to Molech and various Cannanite gods is one of two valleys that surround the Old City of Jerusalem. It was called, in Scripture, 'the Valley of the son of (Ben) Hinnom' (גְּיאַת בֶּן-חִנּוֹם).

"They have built the high places of Ba'al, בָּעֵל in order to burn up their children in the fire as burnt offerings to Ba'al — something I never ordered or said; it never even entered My heart⁸. Therefore the time is coming," says ADONAI, "when this place will no longer be called either Tofet or the Ben-Hinnom Valley, but the Valley of Slaughter (massacre) (Hebrew ha'haragah מְחֻרָּגָה)." (Jeremiah 19:5-6)

The term Gehhinom is derived from the name of this valley - (Gai) Hinnom. It refers to the destination of the wicked after death. The King James version of the Bible translates this as 'hell'.

Although we do not sacrifice our sons and daughters in fires to pagan gods today, there are many children who are slaughtered every day in every nation (including Israel) through abortion. This 'shedding of the innocent blood of our children' to the 'gods' of materialism, reputation and convenience defiles the land and brings God's judgment. May God have mercy!



Tombs in the Valley of Hinnom

⁸ I find this word mistranslated as 'mind' in most translations but the original Hebrew word is 'libi' which means 'my heart'.

The Sacrifices of Thanksgiving (zevach todah) זְבַח תּוֹדָה

In Psalm 50, God expresses His heart regarding the sacrifices and burnt offerings, saying He is not hungry and therefore does not need to eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats. What God truly desires is that we offer up to Him the ‘sacrifice of thanksgiving’ (*zevah todah*).

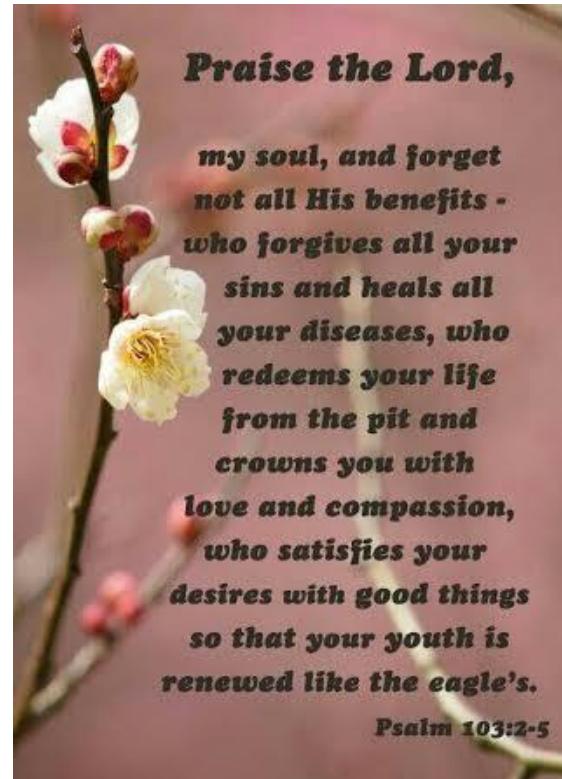
“Do I eat the meat of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Bring your thanks to God as a sacrifice, and keep your vows to the Most High.”

(Psalm 50:13-14)

Why is it so important to give God our expressions of thanksgiving (zevach todah זְבַח תּוֹדָה)? Psalm 50 tells us it is because it gives Elohim honor (kavod).

“Whoever offers thanks as a sacrifice (zevach todah) honors Me.” (Psalm 50:23)

‘Zevach’ is another word for sacrifice and ‘todah’ means thanks. Why is giving thanks called a sacrifice? We all know that there are times when it can be exceedingly difficult to give thanks to God. This is when it is a ‘sacrifice’: when we are sick, in pain and suffering; when our prayers don’t seem to be answered; when our children are in trouble and we see no hope; when our business has gone bankrupt; when our marriage has ended in divorce (or for some – ‘all of the above’).



These are the times (and there are many other circumstances) when to praise and thank God is a supreme sacrifice. We are thanking Him just for who He is; and not for what He is doing or not doing for us. We are not only to give thanks in the good times when everything seems to be going our way; but also in those ‘bad times’ that cause us to feel discouraged or even forsaken – in ALL circumstances we are to give thanks – for this is God’s will.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Messiah Yeshua.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

The Book of Hebrews gives us a similar message:

“Through Yeshua, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.” (Hebrews 13:15)

Adam of the Adamah

The Lord instructed Moses to speak to the children of Israel about bringing their offerings to the Lord. In English, it says, “**When any ‘man’ of you brings an offering to the Lord...** (Leviticus 1:2); but in Hebrew the word used is Adam, אָדָם which is the root of the word ‘Adamah’, אֲדָמָה which means ‘earth, ground, or even dirt’.

The first time I noticed this connection, it blew me away! God created man (adam) out of the dust of the earth (adamah). Hebrew is such an amazing language; besides being the language of Scripture, God has built in all this richness and meaning to give us revelation from the Hebrew letters themselves! I encourage you to learn at least a little Hebrew if you are able.⁹

So in this context, Adam is the word used, not just for the one particular man, but for all of humankind, regardless of race or gender: “**So God created ‘the Adam’ אָדָם in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.**” (Genesis 1:27)

This shows us that it was not only a Jewish male who could bring an offering to the Lord, but anyone – even a foreigner’s offering would be accepted by God. Any foreigner could come to the Temple to pray and God would hear their prayers and answer them, so “**that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel.**” (1 Kings 8:41-43)

Gentiles for Jesus

Worshipping the God of Israel was never meant to be some kind of ‘*exclusive club*’ consisting only of the Jewish people. It may have come as a shock to the first Jewish disciples, as described in Acts 10, but yes, ‘*Gentiles for Jesus*’ is actually Kosher! ☺

Before this time, Jewish people were forbidden from mixing with the heathen ‘goyim’ around them; but after Peter received his tremendous vision from God, he knew that no one having been cleansed by the blood of Yeshua is ever to be called ‘unclean’.

Peter received an incredible revelation in perceiving that, “**God shows no partiality, but in every nation, whoever fear him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.**” (Acts 10:34-35) I don’t know about you, but to me, as a Jewish Messianic Believer, that is really ‘Good News’ – that we can all be one big mishpachah (family) in the Lord.

⁹ Two Hebrew courses for beginners, Shalom Morah I & II, are available on a set of DVD’s with a workbook. Order from the website www.voiceforisrael.net or by mail to the address at the end of the message

God's intent as always been for 'all peoples' – every race and tongue and tribe to worship Him in Spirit and Truth through the Messiah Yeshua. He is our peace, who has broken down the 'machitzah', the middle wall of partition.¹⁰

We are all created in God's image - Jew or Greek, male or female – "...according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Messiah is all and in all..."
(Colossians 3:11)

We all now have equal access to the same God and Father through the blood of Yeshua's sacrifice. Today, as more and more Christians become interested in their 'Jewish roots' (which is good), we must be careful that we don't look to lineage for our significance or identity in the family of God.

I have seen far, far too many Messianic Believers fall into this trap and eventually deny their faith.¹¹ It is our faith working through love that makes our offering acceptable, - not our lineage – which is an 'accident of birth'; or whether or not a man is circumcised in the flesh.

"For in Messiah Yeshua neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." (Galatians 5:6)

Drawing Near to God

The offering is called, in Hebrew, a **Korban קרבן** which is derived from the word **karov קרוב**, meaning 'near'. The offering made a way for the person to draw near to God. When we take even baby steps to draw near to God, just like the father of the prodigal son, He will see us from afar off and **run** to meet us!

"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." (James 4:8)

The sacrifice needed to be a '*male without blemish*' (Leviticus 1:3). One thing this tells us is that God doesn't want the leftover dregs, the tainted, blemished stuff we were going to throw away anyways. Sometimes we feel so charitable packing up a bag of old clothes for donation to a thrift shop, but these are things we didn't want anymore – things that no longer fit or serve a purpose with us.

But God asked us for something that costs us something – the offering for sacrifice must be '**tamim**' (pure). King David said that he would not give to God that which cost him nothing.

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:14

¹¹ See article, Falling Away on website: www.voiceforisrael.net/articles

“I will not give to God that which costs me nothing.” (1 Chronicles 21:24)

If we throw some pocket change into the offering out of our abundance (money we would have blown on videos or fast food) this does not fulfill the mitzvah (commandment) of giving God our tithe. Some people calculate what they need to pay their bills and financial obligations and take care of these first, hoping that they will have enough left over to give their tithe; but often there is nothing left to give to God.

It is the same with time. If I start doing a bunch of things in the morning, thinking I will get to my ‘time with the Lord’ later, I find it difficult if not impossible to find that time; but if I give God the first and best part of my day in the morning, He makes all my other tasks to fall into place.

God’s word promises that if we will bring Him the ‘firstfruits’, He will make sure that our needs are met. Tithing demonstrates our faith in God as our ultimate Provider. We say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want” (in Hebrew – **loh echsar** –literally **nothing is missing!**)¹² Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Halleluyah! The tithe is holy; it does not belong to us – it belongs to God. When we obey this command to give God the first and best, then He will bless us abundantly.

“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase, so your barns will be filled with plenty, and our vats will overflow with new wine.” (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Yeshua - A Lamb Without Blemish

The other important thing to note is that Yeshua, as the sacrificial offering, was stated several times to be ‘faultless’, ‘sin-less’ and ‘without blemish’. For example, Pilate symbolically washed his hands in a basin and said, “**You take him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him.**” (John 19:6)



The Passover lamb needed to be inspected for four days in order to make sure that it was a pure (tamim) and without blemish before it was slain and offered to the Lord. Yeshua entered Jerusalem and taught in the Temple for four days in full view of the people and religious leaders before He was slain on Passover as the unblemished Lamb of God.

Since the Torah states that our sins separate us from communion with the Most High, (Isaiah 59:2), the offering (also called an ‘oleh’ in Hebrew which means ‘to go up’) is necessary to reconcile us to a holy God.

¹² Psalm 23:1

The sacrifice would make atonement for the one giving the offering. In English, the word atonement comes from at-one-ment, indicating that the offering is to make us one (*echad*) with God – to re-establish our connection and communion with Him. In Hebrew, the word used is ‘kapar כִּפֶּר’ meaning ‘to atone, to reconcile, or to bring back into unity persons at variance with one another’. The blood sacrifice is meant to atone for our sins and to restore our sense of a close relationship with God. His Word states that it is “**the blood that makes atonement for our sins.**” (Leviticus 17:11)

Many Jewish people go to synagogue on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) year after year after year and fast and pray all day in a hot, stuffy room, desperately hoping that somehow God will find it in His heart to forgive their sins and write their names in the Book of Life. This is how I grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home. But I, along with most others, did not have a clear understanding that it is the blood of sacrifice that makes atonement for our sins. Now that the Temple no longer exists and the animal sacrifices have been abolished, a new ‘bloodless’ religion has been developed by the rabbis. Now, according to Rabbinic Judaism, three things are to be sufficient to cover our sins (the three t’s): Tshuvah, (repentence), Tzedakah (giving of charity) and T’fillah (prayer).

Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur, by Maurycy Gottlieb (1878)



But how can we possibly know when our level of repenting, giving and praying has been sufficient to atone for our sins? God’s ways are not our ways – He requires a blood sacrifice and without it, all we have is a vague ‘hope’ that our names are written in the Book of Life. Without the blood, we never know for certain if we are forgiven and have peace with God or not. But when we place our faith in Yeshua’s sacrifice of his own life, we may know that our sins are truly forgiven.

No Sweat

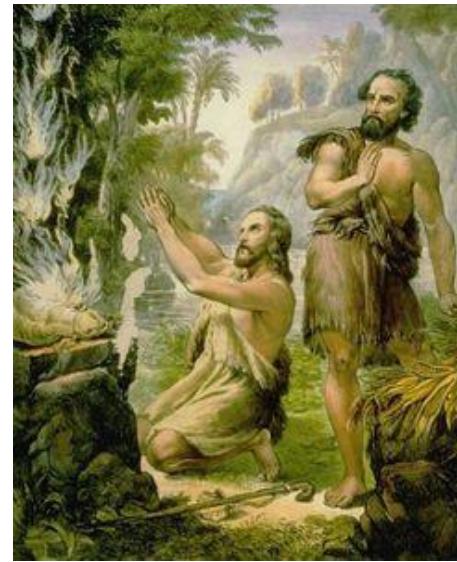
We can see this vast difference in approaching God in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain brought the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, while Abel brought an offering of the firstborn of his flock.¹³

¹³ Genesis 4:3-4

Cain's was a '*bloodless*' offering; but one that he had sweated over with a great deal of effort while tilling the hard ground full of thorns and thistles. God did not accept Cain's offering of sweat and effort without the blood; it was Abel's offering which God accepted – the blood sacrifice.

The clothing that the priest (cohen) wore needed to be made of natural materials so that he did not sweat while he served God. Are we getting this? The first way to approach God is through a man-made religion, full of legalistic rules which we must endeavor to keep to the letter in order to be acceptable by God. But it is never enough. And so we are, like Cain, left angry and full of resentment:

"I've tried so hard! I've worked and worked at being good enough – how dare God not accept my sweaty offering! If all this effort is not good enough for God, then that's just too bad!"



Cain & Abel, 19th century painting, Wikipedia

The second approach (Abel's) is just to come to God with an offering of the blood of sacrifice; it is with an attitude of humble receiving that we are saved - by grace, and not by our own works. **"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."** (Ephesians 2:8,9)

There is a vast difference between the two approaches; in the first we are always trying to '*earn brownie points*' with God. We hope He remembers to put the little stars, checks and stickers on our chart at the end of each day. I knew of a Jewish man who was dying of brain cancer. He went to the synagogue on Shabbat, not to worship; but in hopes that it would earn him enough merit with God to save him from death. Unfortunately, he did not survive.

If we can only believe that He accepts us by grace through the blood of His son, Yeshua. It seems to me that there are still some 'Cain's' out there who want to slay some Abel's for daring to believe we can be forgiven by Yeshua's blood alone. Yeshua's blood not only 'covers' our sins, it removes them – as far as the east is from the west!

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins...Not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood He entered the most Holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." (Hebrews 10:4, 9:11-15)

A Sweet Smelling Aroma

The burnt offering offered up to God is called a ‘**sweet aroma**’ to God’. (Leviticus 1:17) It struck me one day – how can the smell of death, the burnt flesh of one of God’s creatures, be a pleasing aroma to God? What does this mean? Does it mean that God likes the smell of a good BBQ? Possibly ...but somehow I doubt it.



Noah's Sacrifice (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

In Hebrew, the words used are ‘*Re'ach Nihoach*’. The root, **nach**, is a word meaning **comfort or rest**. Since this burnt offering could only be offered up to God with a free, willing spirit, I believe it was the person’s heartfelt desire to be restored into right relationship with God that brought comfort to His heart and the resulting reconciliation brought rest to the soul of man.

It is the offering given by one’s own free will that is a sweet smelling aroma to God – when we give a sacrifice of our own free will – not under compulsion, coercion or manipulation, which is not a ‘*free will offering*’, but rather victimization.

Yeshua was never once a victim; He offered himself willingly as a sacrifice for us all. He said, “**No one takes it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again.**” (John 10:18)

The soldiers witnessing Yeshua’s crucifixion mocked him, “*If you are really the Son of God, then get yourself down off that cross!*” (Matthew 27:40). Yeshua could have in an instant called forth a legion of angels to help him escape the cross, but He chose to lay down His life for us. He gave Himself as a ‘*willing sacrifice*’ – for you and for me.

Can we even begin to understand this kind of sacrificial love? And yet husbands are exhorted to love their wives with this kind of love, ready and willing to sacrifice themselves if need be, for the woman they have married.¹⁴ Wow! Amazing love.

I love the song we sometimes sing in our home fellowship meetings, “*Amazing love, how can it be, that You my King would die for me? Amazing love, I know it's true; and it's my joy to honor You in all I do, I honor You.*”¹⁵

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:25

¹⁵ 'Amazing Love' Written by Billy James Foote and recorded by Chris Tomlin

Parenting, Marriage and other Flesh Burners

Because Yeshua has shown us the way, we are exhorted to follow in his footsteps by becoming ‘**living sacrifices**’.¹⁶ Perhaps some people will actually be called upon to lay down their lives for the Lord as martyrs; but the rest of us must still ‘die daily’ to the selfish, self-centered demands of our own flesh.

God is called a consuming fire¹⁷, and He will burn away some of our ‘fleshly’ attitudes and behaviors if we will offer ourselves as living sacrifices – willingly place ourselves on the altar, saying, “**Thy will and not mine be done.**”

Burning flesh may stink to us, but every time we choose to be led by His Spirit rather than submitting to our flesh, God smells a sweet aroma which brings Him great pleasure and comfort.

But let’s not kid ourselves – the ‘burnt offering’ of our own flesh can involve some real suffering! I well recall when, after a ten year hiatus, and at an age when most women have long ago given up childbearing, I gave birth to my fourth child, Liat, our first Sabra (native Israeli).

Staying up all night again after the age of forty with a colicky, crying, screaming infant in a foreign country with a flimsy support network; and at the same time adjusting to a re-marriage and a newly blended family, definitely constitutes as a flesh burner!

Liat seemed to be a baby that favored ‘attachment parenting’ - which meant that she did not easily tolerate being put down... for even a second! I remember crying about it to an Arabic woman who had come in to help me for a few hours. “*Oh*”, she said, “*At her age, it’s always like this.*” (easy for her to say) ☺



Hannah holding baby Liat, born Nov. 25th 1999, with Timothy @ age 6, and our landlords, Tova and Amitai, in Ariel, Israel

To someone who had already spent twenty years sacrificing her own needs and desires for the sake of young children (as most mothers do) starting all over again was definitely hard on the

¹⁶ Romans 12:1

¹⁷ Hebrews 12:29

flesh. Being married to someone who was dominating when one does not like to be told what to do or not to do is another ‘flesh burner’. Sometimes marriage can really bring out the worst in us. It’s like I didn’t even know that I had a temper until I got married and had kids. ☺

Many of these situations where our flesh is clamoring (usually loudly) for relief, are actually doing a good work in us, refining our character and causing us to become more and more conformed into God’s wonderful image and likeness. It has been said that God is more concerned with our character than our comfort. I think I agree with this statement.

Every sacrifice is going to cost us something – but it also brings the promise of a reward. Yeshua’s sacrifice took him to the cross – but He endured the shame because he set his sights on the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

Every sincere act of self-sacrifice for the good of another holds the promise of a reward. Yeshua promised that, “**He who loses his life for My sake will find it.**” (Matthew 10:39).

And it is also promised that “**everyone who leaves their father and mother, sisters and brothers, children, houses and lands, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, will receive many times more in this present lifetime and in the age to come – eternal life.**” (Luke 18:29-30).

Now that’s a promise I not only hang onto (since leaving everyone and everything behind in Canada to make aliyah to Israel); but at times I even cling to it for dear life - like a drowning woman with a life preserver!

Therefore, it is not so much the sacrifice itself which is a pleasing aroma to God, but the heart of the person offering it. When King David came to grips with the seriousness of his sin against God when he committed adultery with Batsheva and arranged for her husband to be killed in battle, he wrote,

“**For You do not desire sacrifice or I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart – these, O God, You will not despise....**” (Psalm 51:16-17)

God doesn’t want empty sacrifices or dutiful offerings. It is a spirit that has been broken over one’s sins against God and a contrite heart that He will receive. It is our obedience which pleases God more than sacrifice, as Samuel said when confronting King Saul, “**Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.**”¹⁸

In the end, it is not simply the sacrifice that really matters to God; but the heart that offers it. All the Hebrew prophets warned the people that offering sacrifices without accompanying morality and obedience would be in vain. The Prophet Jeremiah became the voice of the Lord’s rebuke to

¹⁸ 1 Samuel 15:22

Israel when they were offering empty sacrifices and burnt offerings while at the same time practicing idolatry and abominations.

“Thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘**Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.**’” (Jeremiah 7:21-23)

What God ultimately requires of each one of us is to practice justice, mercy and humility towards God and man.

'It has been told to you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD does require of you: only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' (Micah 6:8)

Jumping off Tall Buildings

God desires our obedience; and any time we break His law, we are guilty of disobedience. Even if a person is unaware of breaking a commandment or sinning, he or she is still guilty and will still suffer the consequences.

“And if anyone sin, and do any of the things that the Lord has commanded not to be done, though he know it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.” (Leviticus 5:17).

In other words, ignorance of the law is no excuse! If a child, ignorant of the law of gravity, were to jump off a very tall building, the law of gravity will still cause that child to fall and likely injure himself. A student at the Messianic school in Jerusalem actually just tested out this principle and found out that - yup, jumping off tall buildings really can result in two broken legs!

This has absolutely nothing to do with God’s love for this little boy, or for us; God’s universe has simply been established on laws and principles that apply whether we know or understand them or not. This is why it was necessary for the Cohen (priest) to make all these repeated offerings and sacrifices to atone for the people’s unintentional sins.

Leaving Our Gifts at the Altar – Making Things Right

Deliberate sins, however, were excluded from the sphere of sacrifice; and in all cases, repentance and restitution of the wrong done needed to precede the sacrificial act. **“Then it shall be that if he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took by robbery...he shall even restore it in full...”** (Leviticus 6:5)

I find it amazing that we see an affirmation of these principles in the New Testament readings as well. “**For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...**” (Hebrews 10:26) So much for ‘greasy grace’ eh?

And if we stand praying and remember that we have something against a brother, we are to ‘leave our gift at the altar’ and go make it right with him first (repent and make restitution).

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”¹⁹

Our relationships with one another are very important to God! He wants us to love one another and to show mercy, being tenderhearted and readily forgiving each other as He has forgiven us.

The Blood of Sprinkling

The cohen²⁰ would dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil. (Leviticus 4:17). We may note that the blood of Yeshua, who is called the Cohen Hagadol,²¹ was also sprinkled before the Lord seven times:

1. Jesus sweated drops of blood when He prayed to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Luke 22:30-44)
2. Jesus was struck in the face until it was ‘marred beyond recognition’. (Isaiah 52:14)
3. Jesus’ back was scourged with a whip. (Isaiah 50:6, Matthew 27:26)
4. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head. (Mark 5:17)
5. They plucked out his beard. (Isaiah 50:6)
6. They pierced his hands and feet. (Psalm 22:16)
7. They pierced his side with a spear and blood and water came out. (John 19:34)

¹⁹ Matthew 5:23-24

²⁰ Cohen – Jewish priest

²¹ Cohen Hagadol – high priest

The book of Hebrews talks about the blood of sprinkling in a unique way: “**the blood of sprinkling...speaks better things than that of Abel.**” (Hebrews 12:24). What does this mean that the blood of sprinkling speaks better things than that of Abel?

Earlier we mentioned the account of Cain and Abel. God’s rejection of Cain’s offering and his sinful reaction to this led to him murdering his brother Abel. We can see what things the blood of Abel spoke. God said his blood cried out to Him from the ground. (Genesis 4:10) What did Abel’s blood cry out to God for? Justice, retribution, and vengeance.

What could be the better things that the blood of Jesus speaks of? Mercy, grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation! James, in witnessing the crucifixion, declared that “**Mercy triumphs over judgment.**” (James 2:13)

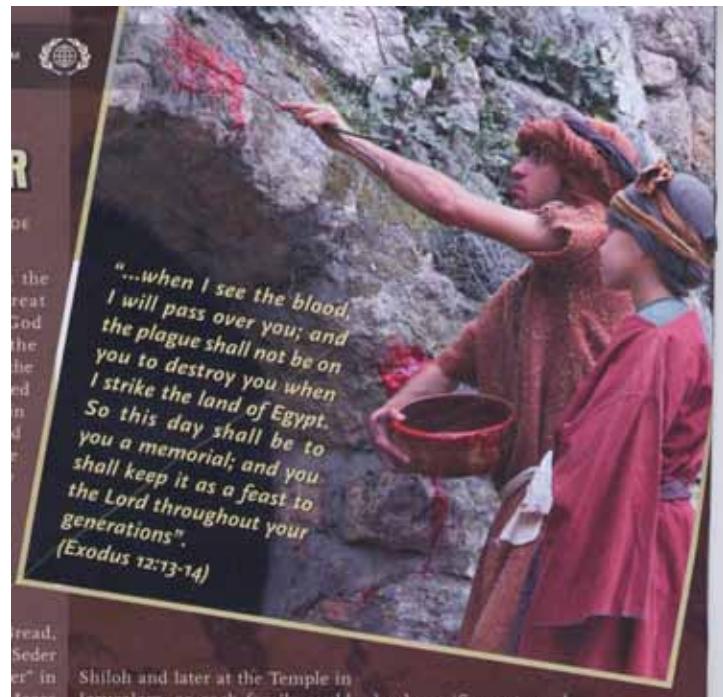
This is very good news! Because all of us are guilty of breaking the law of God, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. The prophet Ezekiel wrote that ‘**the soul who sins will die.**’ But because of the blood of sprinkling of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah), we have obtained mercy.

This is the central message of Passover. The wrath of God will not rest upon us to destroy us, but will ‘pass-over’ us because of the Passover Lamb who was slain to not only cover but to totally ‘take away’ our sins.

“And when I see the blood I will pass over you.” (Exodus 12:13)

Free at Last

Here is the most important thing to remember from this entire parashah: Just as the blood of the lamb had to be applied to the doorposts and mezuzot²² of our homes, so must the blood of sprinkling must be applied to our hearts, by faith, to wash us clean from every trace of guilty conscience and shame over our past sins.



²² Mezuzot (plural for mezuzah – the sideposts of the doorway. Also to refer to a box placed on the doorway of every observant Jewish home that contains the word of God, “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22)

The pure waters refer to the mikvah, the ritual water immersion, which is symbolic of our new spiritual birth. Only when our hearts have been cleaned (sprinkled with the blood of Yeshua) and our bodies immersed in the mikvah may we have this assurance of our faith that allows us to draw near to God.

A guilty conscience over our past will separate us from intimacy with God as well as other Believers in the Body of Messiah. These scriptures are followed by an exhortation to make sure we continue to meet together with other Believers as the Body of Messiah.²³ We cannot expect to walk free of sin in isolation. We need one another to stay accountable and to exhort one another to live a life of holiness. We have each been given the ministry of reconciliation and should be agents of healing and restoration one to another (2 Corinthians 5:18)

I have been in congregations, however, where it seemed like every time I attended a service, I walked away feeling guilty and condemned. It seems to me that this is one of the reasons why some people stop going to Church or congregation – the sense of condemnation is so painful – a feeling of never measuring up to God’s (or maybe people’s) high standards.²⁴

But this is not the spirit of Yeshua, who clearly said He did not come to condemn us but to save us (John 3:17). This sense of guilt, shame and condemnation can linger, however, even when we have come to faith in Yeshua, even knowing our sins are forgiven, and even having been washed with the pure water of the mikvah.

Have you ever felt this way? Living under condemnation can become such a heavy weight that we can no longer run our race with the necessary endurance. We need to ‘strip off’ that lead weight and claim the freedom that is rightfully ours in Messiah Yeshua! For if our hearts condemn us then we are not going to have the confidence in God that we need to walk in victory.²⁵

It is almost impossible to walk in joy simultaneously with condemnation; and if the joy of the Lord is our strength²⁶, then walking around feeling condemned is going to rob us, not only of our joy, but also steal our strength. If we have been feeling weak and tired, with little joy or peace, it

²³ Hebrews 10:25

²⁴ I would encourage you to keep seeking God to find a life-giving congregation where you can feel at home.

²⁵ 1 John 3:20 - 21

²⁶ Nehemiah 8:10

may not be a physiological problem at all; but simply the weight of guilt, shame and condemnation that we drag around with us all day long. Beloved, it doesn't have to be like this.

Remembering Our Sins No More

When we have put our trust in Yeshua, God does not hold our sins against us. In fact, He doesn't even remember them! This is one of the extreme benefits of the New Covenant, in comparison to the Old Covenant.

Through the Hebrew Prophet, Jeremiah, God promised a 'New Covenant' to Judah and Israel, NOT like the covenant God made with them when He took them out of Egypt, (a covenant which the people broke), but a NEW COVENANT, where God's Torah would be in our minds and written on our hearts. All of us, from the least to the greatest, can now have a close, intimate relationship with the Lord.

"For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31:31-34)

Yeshua Hamashiach (The Messiah) is the mediator of this New Covenant, sealed in His blood, which is sufficient to cleanse us from a guilty conscience. Under the Old Covenant, the Cohen had to perform the sacrifices over and over again, and even so, only 'covering' the sin,

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." (Heb. 10:4)

But Yeshua's sacrifice paid the price 'once and for all'.

"And every Cohen stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God...For by one offering, He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." (Hebrews 10:10-14)

We may think, '*Well, I'm certainly not perfect; maybe this doesn't apply to me.*' But in the Hebrew, the word for perfect is (**Hishlim**) הִשְׁלִימָה, which comes from the root **shalem** שָׁלֵם, meaning wholeness, completion, and peace. By Yeshua's stripes, we have been made shalem (whole, complete, healed). It is finished, done, completed.²⁷

My question is, "*Are we (myself included), like these Old Covenant Cohanim (priests), standing daily, offering up to God the same old sins with the same old guilt and shame still attached, over and over again?*"

²⁷ See Parashah study P'kudei

Do we think that they have only been temporarily ‘*covered*’ and that we must ask forgiveness repeatedly? Or will we dare to believe that if we have repented and attempted to make restitution, that the blood of Yeshua has completely removed these sins from our record? Could it be possible that when we bring up the guilt and condemnation that we feel over these past sins, that God says, “*I don’t know what you are talking about? I don’t remember them.*”

Love keeps no record of wrongs.²⁸ We would do well to imitate God in this and wipe out some of the wrong records we have been keeping against some people in our lives. It reminds me of my mother, who is one of the most gracious women I have ever had the honor of knowing.

As a teenager, I went through a rebellious stage and did many things that later, I felt ashamed of. Especially after coming to faith in Yeshua, the Holy Spirit deeply convicted me of my sins towards God and especially the ways in which I failed to honor my mother and father. I approached them to express my remorse and repentance; but my mother looked at me in disbelief, saying, “*I don’t remember you doing anything wrong!*” And the amazing thing is, I know she really meant it!

My Mom has this incredible ability to only remember the good things about the people she loves. And it seems to me that she imitates God in this way also.

We, however, may have a harder time forgiving and forgetting our sins. For the longest time, I struggled with condemnation over my past sins of abortion. I may have thought that I had gotten over it and received God’s forgiveness but then something would come up to resurrect the sense of guilt, condemnation and shame.

My eldest daughter came home from her ultrasound so excited! She couldn’t stop talking about how amazing it was to see, even at this early stage in her pregnancy, the tiny heart beating, and the perfectly formed, though miniature little body of her unborn child. As she described her joy in seeing images of her baby in her womb, I could feel this dark, dense cloud of condemnation, remorse, guilt, and shame cover me once again like a heavy cloak.²⁹

At some pro-life events, I sometimes find myself just wanting to run away or hide from those who, rather than being ‘pro-life’, are more focused on being ‘against abortion’, and become insensitive to those who have experienced the horrors of abortion. One man, who had expressed his ‘righteous anger’ in a particularly judgmental way, later came and apologized to me after he

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 13:5

²⁹ Hannah’s personal pro-life testimony is available in book form as Grafted In Again, or DVD, Because He Lives. You may order through the website: www.voiceforisrael.net or by mail at the address at the end of this message.

heard my testimony - as it is written, “**Blessed are the merciful for they shall be shown mercy.**” (Matthew 5:7)

Even if we have dealt with something in our lives, condemnation can rear its ugly head again to drag us back down into that dark pit. We need to rise up out of our wretchedness, shake it off, and remember what Yeshua has done for us.

Even the apostle Paul had times when he felt wretched over his sins – times when he had lost the fierce war raging between his flesh and the spirit. He said, “**O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah) Adoneinu (our Lord).**” (Romans 7:24-25)

Yes, we may feel like a wretch at times, but we can still sing praise as in the lyrics of the well known hymn, “*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost but now I'm found ; was blind but now I see.*”³⁰

The first verse of the next chapter in Romans begins with the word, ‘Therefore:’. It is a connecting verse to Paul’s preceding experience of wretchedness , “**Therefore, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Messiah Yeshua...**” (Romans 8:1)

We have a choice to make. We can go through life feeling condemned over our sins, and live weak, defeated lives; or we can ask and receive a cleansing of our guilty conscience through Yeshua’s once and for all sacrifice, believing the word of God which says,

“**Those who put their trust in Him will not be ashamed (condemned).**”³¹

We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us enough to die for us, and nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Messiah Yeshua!³² Halleluyah! We need to let the past be the past, hopefully learn from it (if nothing else, what *doesn't* work), and press on, believing that God still has a good plan for us, a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

Sometimes it takes a great big failure (or maybe even a series of them), to have grace with the faults and failures of others. Maybe in this way, I have been privileged - because she who has been forgiven of much loves much (Luke 7:47).

³⁰ " Amazing Grace" written by John Newton , published in 1779.

³¹ Romans 9:33, 10:11, Isaiah 28:16

³² Romans 8:37,39

I feel almost sorry for people who have never really messed up ‘big time’, people who have it all together; because if you’ve never fallen totally flat on your face a time or two (or three or more), it’s too easy to think, “*Oh, I would NEVER do that! Or how could they EVER have done that?*”

Anyone who has fallen very, very low, and has been lifted out of that dark and hopeless pit of miry clay by the amazing love and mercy of God through Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah) knows how desperately we all need the grace and mercy of the Lord. **“His mercies are new every morning; therefore we are not consumed.”** (Lamentations 3:22-23) Praise the Lord!

Yeshua’s death is ‘the way’ to life, even life forevermore.ⁱ

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:24)

Closing Prayer:

Thank you God for laying all of our sins upon Your son, Yeshua, so that we may be forgiven. Thank you, Yeshua, for being obedient to the Father - for willingly laying down your life as the korban sacrifice to make kaparah (atonement) for all of our sins.

I apply this blood of sprinkling to my heart by faith now and receive healing for my Spirit, soul and body. I know that You have already offered me freedom from condemnation; but help me to receive this precious gift and to walk in this truth that sets me free. Help me to make right restitution if possible to those I have sinned against so that love and unity may be restored.

Thank you that You have cast my sins as far away from me as the east is from the west. Help me, Adonai, to have the same grace to freely forgive others as You have forgiven me. In Yeshua’s name. Amen.

I want to close with speaking the AARONIC BENEDICTION (BLESSING) over you:

Y’VARECH’CHA ADONAI V’YISHM’RECHA

YA’ER ADONAI PANAV A LECHA VICHUNECHA

YISA ADONAI PANAV ALECHA V’YASEM L’CHA SHALOM

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU

MAY THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU

MAY THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTELENCE UPON YOU

AND GIVE YOU PEACE

Vayikra Study Questions

1. Do you recognize Nissan 1 as the Biblical ‘new year’? Do you celebrate it in any way?
2. Do you see yourself as a ‘priest (cohen) of the Lord’? How do you serve Him?
3. What are the five types of offerings & sacrifices from these chapters of Vayikra?
4. Does the subject of animal sacrifices make you uncomfortable? Does it seem cruel?
5. What was the real purpose of these sacrifices? How do they point to Yeshua?
6. If God forbids human sacrifice and abhors child sacrifice how could He have sacrificed His own son, Yeshua, on the cross?
7. Do you tend to give thanks to God only in the ‘good times’ or do you give the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in all circumstances?
8. Do you still feel like you have to work hard to win the favor and approval of God? Or do you receive His love and forgiveness by grace alone? Discuss
9. Do you have any ‘flesh burners’ in your life? Can you see these as a benefit?
10. Is there some circumstance where you need to submit your will to Adonai and be ‘crucified’ with Yeshua out of obedience? Discuss
11. Do you still struggle with a guilty conscience or a sense of condemnation? How can you be set free from this burden once and for all?

About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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